

21st OCTOBER 1982

South Melbourne Council has dug its heels in over mooted changes to the area's fixed rail network, and called on the State Government to retain and upgrade existing train and tram services.

The call has been issued in response to a report submitted to the latest meeting of the St Kilda, South Melbourne and Port Melbourne Public Transport Study Group.

The report details a series of options to existing tram and train services, and sets out a number of alternative light rail routes through the three municipalities, as well as changes to current tram routes.

South Melbourne councillor Anne Fahey has said the alternatives being suggested are "a much more devious way of implementing the Lonie Report".

"I'm very concerned that they're going to start dismantling the railway lines, and we won't even get the light rail," Ms Fahey said.

The light rail options exclude traffic from the Yarra River Bridge, sections of which have already been condemned in a previous report as being in "a potentially dangerous condition", and make Spencer Street the main city terminus for South Melbourne commuters.

At its meeting this week South Melbourne Council strongly urged the State Government to make whatever repairs were necessary to the Yarra River Bridge to keep existing rail services to South and Port Melbourne operating.

The Council also expressed the fear that the light rail alternatives would mean greatly increased travel times for South Melbourne residents going to the city or trying to make connections with rail services on other lines.

The time increases will be caused by Melbourne's traffic-ridden streets, according to councillor Fahey.

"The intersection of Flinders and Spencer Streets is a good example," she said.

"This is already congested because of cars turning right into Flinders Street; because of their size, light rail vehicles would be impeded by the heavy traffic at this intersection even more than the existing trams."

Councillor Fahey has also criticised other aspects of light rail.

"Light rail is designed to work with minimal manpower, and if it's introduced, many station staff, guards and drivers could lose their jobs," she said.

"Economically, it's not a good move.

by  
**BRONWYN CRAN**  
present costs of fixed rail," she said.

The three options mooted last week all include replacement of the St Kilda train service by a light rail route travelling along Clarendon Street and by slightly different routes through South Melbourne to St Kilda, terminating at the intersection of Carlisle Street and St Kilda Road.

The first option would terminate the South Melbourne and St Kilda Beach tram route near the intersection of Albert and Canterbury Roads.

The second option would build a connection between the South Melbourne and St Kilda tram routes along Danks Street between Victoria and Mills Streets; with the third option there would be no alteration to existing tram services.

### Alternative

For Port Melbourne two light rail alternatives have been proposed, both replacing the existing train service.

The first would travel via Clarendon Street and the rail reservation to Graham Street, the second would follow the same route and then extend via the rail reservation and Howe Parade to Garden City.

From figures quoted in the report, it appears there is little difference between the three options for South Melbourne, in terms of catchment population, patronage, travel time, and capital and operating costs.

Each option would service about 29,000 people, would carry around 11,000 people per day, would take 20 minutes to reach the city, cost around \$12m to introduce and from \$4m to \$5m to operate.

For Port Melbourne the Garden City option would

be more costly, but would reach more people.

The question of freight services on the Port Melbourne train line has not yet been considered by the Public Transport Committee.

However, it has been mentioned in a previous report that keeping the line open for freight would eventually mean a \$20m outlay to rebuild the Yarra River Bridge.

None of the light rail options are definite alternatives for the future, according to a Transport Ministry official.

"Everything is a possibility at the moment," said Peter Don, project manager of the Public Transport Inquiry.

"The Government has a commitment to run fixed rail services in the area, and is not narrowing down its options at this stage," Mr Don said.

● The Public Transport Study Group was set up by the State Labor Government after its election, to inquire into public transport in St Kilda, South Melbourne and Port Melbourne.

Its members include local council representatives, transport union delegates, Transport Ministry officials and a panel of expert advisers.

In both their submissions to the Group, both the South Melbourne Council and the local ALP branch called for the retention of fixed rail services, the staffing of stations at all times when trains were running and the installation of more frequent services.

Both groups also demanded that fares be reduced to increase patronage and that the Middle Park and Montague Stations be immediately rebuilt and restored.

## 'Smokescreen' claim

The Bayside Public Transport Committee has added its voice to South Melbourne Council's protest over light rail options.

The Committee has said the rail link to Flinders Street Station has to be retained for the benefit of all train travellers on the Port Melbourne and St Kilda lines.

The options only pay lip-

bring forward any submissions from local people calling for the scrapping of the rail bridge and replacing the trains with a light rail system," Mr Willis said.

"It appears that the main decisions have already been made and that this study has been used as a smokescreen

9th NOVEMBER 1982

# Clyde to build locos in Vic.

**SYDNEY based heavy engineering group, Clyde Industries Ltd., intends to set up its first locomotive manufacturing plant in Victoria.**

The decision to start manufacturing in Victoria follows a Victorian Railways decision to have Clyde Industries rebuild 26 "B" class locomotives originally built by Clyde in the 1950s.

"It is significant to note that this is the first Victorian government railway to have a locomotive supplier rebuild their locomotives, thus following the highly successful locomotive rebuild program for New Zealand railway," directors say.

"During the year the company manufactured or rebuilt a total of 29 main-line diesel electric locomotives.

"Further orders were received for a total of 44 diesel electric locomotives, and at the end of the year the division had 163 locomotives on order, the largest locomotive order book in the company's history," directors say.

In the year to June 30 profit fell for the first time in 10 years to \$12.2 million, down from \$16.1 million. Annual dividend was steady at 11.25c and a 1-for-10 bonus was announced.

Directors blamed industrial action for the profit fall.

In particular, the 13 weeks' strike at the South Australian locomotive plant was most costly.

**The Tramways Union has come out in favour of light rail vehicles as an option for the public transport future of the St Kilda, South and Port Melbourne regions.**

The union's executive has voted for Option Four-one of the light rail alternatives mooted at the last meeting of the regions' Public Transport Study Group.

This option provides for replacement of the St Kilda train service by a light rail service routed via Clarendon Street along the St Kilda rail reservation to St Kilda Station.

The light rail vehicles would then travel along Fitzroy Street to the upper Esplanade, and along Carlisle Street to a terminus at the St Kilda Road intersection.

With this alternative there would be no change to existing tram services.

Tramways Union Secretary Jim Harper says his executive believes the light rail option will benefit the public.

"Light-rail is a two-carriage system which can service more people than a tram, and which has more frequent stops than a train.

"It's a faster and more efficient way of reaching the central business district than by train," Mr Harper said.

"Heavy rail is really more

suitable for longer journeys."

Mr Harper emphasised that voting for the light rail option did not automatically exclude heavy rail from the region's public transport system of the future.

"We'll have to decide on one recommendation sooner or later, but we have to know more about freight before deciding on a light or heavy rail option," Mr Harper said.

The St Kilda Council has also supported Option Four because it would use the existing railway reserve.

However, St Kilda delegate to the Transport Study Group, Cr Colin Bell, has underlined the fact that "no decisions have been made on anything yet."

The Australian Railways Union (ARU) has made no firm commitment to a light rail option at this stage, but has emphasised that it wants the best transport system for the public.

"The public has been given an ample opportunity to express its opinion to the Study Group, and we're now getting to the real guts of deciding on alternatives," organiser Russell O'Brien said.